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AUTHOR Lawson, V. Lonnie
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ABSTRACT

In 1830, Missouri was chosen as the Mormon's "Center Place," a place to live and worship in tranquility for all church members. However, their presence created conflict between themselves and the non-Mormon citizens, and harassment and fighting between the two groups led to the Mormons' expulsion by the state's government in 1838. Dissatisfaction with the Mormons and their religious practices occurred because: (1) Mormons did not patronize local merchants, preferring to deal among themselves; (2) they voted as a bloc which allowed them to control local politics; (3) they had sympathetic views towards Indians and Blacks; and (4) they believed in group welfare instead of the individualism of the frontier society. Harassment by non-Mormons caused the religious group to move from Jackson County to Clay County to Caldwell and Daviess County by 1838. Rumors continued to spread rapidly about their religious practices and their relationship with the Indians. The indication of violence between Mormons and non-Mormons, plus the fear of an Indian uprising, prompted Governor Lilburn W. Boggs to call out the state militia to maintain order. On October 25, 1838, fighting broke out with the state militia and two days later, Boggs issued the document known as the "Extermination Order," directing that the Mormons be treated as "enemies" to be either exterminated or driven from the state. The state militia occupied Mormon communities, and the people ordered to leave the state. By 1839, most Mormons had left Missouri for Illinois. (DJC)

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MISSOURI HISTORY NOT FOUND IN THE TEXTBOOKS: GOVERNOR LILBURN BOGGS AND THE MORMON EXPULSION.

By

V. Lonnie Lawson
Central Missouri State University
Warrensburg, Missouri

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Introduction

Missouri is rich in history. However, much of it fails to get into the textbooks because it is lost, over-looked, discredited or covers a specific incident that would rather be forgotten. Such is the case with the "Mormon War" of 1838. Each of the above reasons could apply to this isolated part of Missouri history. However, the Missouri State Archives in Jefferson City holds documents which substantiate the existence of a "Mormon War."

On October 27, 1838 Governor Lilburn W. Boggs issued an order to the state militia that labeled the Mormons as enemies of the state of Missouri, and he directed the militia to immediately either remove all Mormons from the state or kill those who refused. This document, commonly referred to as the "Extermination Order," resulted from truths, rumors, and years of disharmony existing between Mormons and non-Mormons since the 1830 arrival of the Mormons. What had begun as a revelation from God to establish the perfect city and community ended in violence and death. This paper was constructed using the "Mormon War Papers" housed in the Missouri State Archives and will show the Mormons were driven from Missouri because of the effects, direct and indirect, that their religious beliefs had on the non-Mormon community and because of the elected state officials' lack of sympathy.

Joseph Smith founded Mormonism based upon visions he received as a boy in the state of New York during the 1820s. In these visions he encountered God and Christ, who informed the fourteen year-old that he should join no existing religion. Several years later he came to realize the significance of that original message. According to Smith, at this time the angel Moroni told him that he had been selected to translate a book written upon golden plates, bearing the truth about the American Indian and the gospel of God. After a wait of four years, Smith received the gold plates on September 22, 1827 as Moroni had promised.[1]

Between 1827 and 1829 Joseph Smith along with his mother and two friends, Martin Harris and Oliver Cowderey, transcribed the plates into The Book of Mormon. Published in 1830, this work explained the origin of the American Indian as being the Lost Tribe of Israel and contained the instructions and sources for beginning a new religion.[2] (This belief about the American Indian would later cause much trouble.)

The membership of the Church started slowly, but it

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[1] Joseph Fielding Smith, Essentials in Church History. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1972, pp. 38-9, 44 and 51.

[2] Thomas F. O'Dea, The Mormons. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957, p. 26.

increased steadily. By the time the Mormons entered Missouri in the early 1830s their numbers had risen to several thousand.

The Church came into existence through revelations, and these revelations continued to be the force that guided the Mormons. The first Mormons arrived in Missouri to confront and convert the Indians who lived on the western border. While the Church leaders were in Missouri the Lord spoke to them telling them "to rejoice upon the land of Missouri, which is the land of your inheritance, . . ."[3] Mormons had been waiting for a revelation as to the location of the City of Zion mentioned in The Book of Mormon and they believed these new revelations pinpointed the area. Church members traveled to Missouri to become a part of the City of Zion, and on August 3, 1831 Joseph Smith placed the cornerstone for the new temple of Zion, located one-half mile west of Independence, Missouri.[4]

The City of Zion represented a place much like the land of Eden, and Smith devised a blue-print for building this perfect city. It would encompass one square mile, which was further divided into ten acre blocks, and one-half acre lots

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[3] Smith, Essentials in Church History, p. 106.

[4] James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, The Story of the Later-Day Saints. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, p. 63.

were planned for each home. Smith intended for the city to grow until it eventually annexed adjacent cities, making Independence, Missouri the "Center Place" for all Mormons.[5]

What was intended to be a place of enduring tranquility where Mormons would always be able live and worship, evolved into a fight for mere existence. At first the only struggle of the Mormons in Missouri occurred between the Church elders in Independence and those in Kirtland, Ohio. Both places wanted the honor of being the location for Church headquarters.[6] However, this matter was overshadowed when strife developed between Mormons and non-Mormons about the presence of the Church in Jackson County, Missouri.

In April, 1833 several hundred non-Mormons gathered in Independence to demonstrate against the continuing influx of Mormons. By July of that year it became clear that the Mormons would eventually outnumber the non-Mormons unless something was done.[7]

Several causes for this conflict stemmed directly or indirectly from Mormon religious beliefs. Mormons said that

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[5] Allen and Leonard, The Story of the Later-Day Saints. pp. 81-82.

[6] R. J. Robertson, Jr., "The Mormon Experience in Missouri 1830-1839 Part I," Missouri Historical Review, LXVIII (April 1974), p. 283.

[7] Robertson, "The Mormon Experience Part I," p. 284.

in Missouri they would establish the millenial kingdom from which "they" would rule the world. Also, outsiders challenged the Mormon leaders' claims of divine revelations. Non-Mormons described this religious fervor of Mormons as "peculiar," "fanatic," "disgusting," "low-class," "knave," "low bred," and a "mass of human corruption."[8]

Other issues of conflict between Mormons and non-Mormons were either tied directly to their religious beliefs or resulted because of the practices of the religious community itself. One conflict not related directly to religious beliefs was economic in nature.

The Mormon population had grown by leaps and bounds during its first years. At first glance this might be interpreted as a sign of prosperity for merchants in the area. However, the increase in Mormons brought no money to the pockets of area merchants. This was because Mormons traded almost exclusively through Mormon store owners. As it became apparent that Church members purchased land so that more of their numbers could emigrate to Missouri, local non-Mormon merchants joined the ranks of the gentiles who wanted

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[8] Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, The Mormon Experience. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, pp. 46-7; Allen and Leonard, The Story of the Later-Day Saints, p. 47.

to expel the Mormons.[9]

Another issue that strained the relationship between the two factions lay in the hierarchical structure of Mormon society. Smith and a few leaders controlled the actions of the congregation. At first this domination appeared to create no problems for outsiders and actually worked for the benefit of the whole Church. But then it began to effect those outside the Church. For example, rather than be objective about the qualities and characteristics of the election candidates, Mormons voted as a bloc and altered the outcome of elections.[10] Therefore, the Mormon political control of a community threatened the existence of democratic rule and meant complete monopolization of the local government.

The hierarchical structure of the Church society also contributed to the local discord. Frontier society during the 1830s thrived on individualism and competitiveness, and it judged success by a person's cleverness and prosperity. In contrast, Mormon society emphasized group welfare whereby every member helped and relied on other members for almost every task. Therefore, the values of the frontier non-

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[9] R. J. Robertson, "The Mormon Experience in Missouri 1830-1839 Part II," Missouri Historical Review, LXVIII (July 1974), pp. 402-403.

[10] Arrington and Bitton, The Mormon Experience, p. 50.

Mormons and those of the Mormons opposed one another so that disagreement was inevitable.[11]

Mormon religious attitudes towards Indians and slavery also created bad feelings between the two groups. As mentioned earlier, Mormon interest in Indian welfare came from their belief, as stated in The Book of Mormon, that American Indians were one of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. Mormons not only wanted to convert the Indian, but they also wanted to merge the two cultures, since they believed the Indian would one day inherit the land that their ancestors originally settled.[12] Even though non-Mormons could not prove that the Mormons encouraged violence among the bordering tribes, they distrusted anyone who viewed the Indians as brothers.

Mormon opposition to slavery was the issue that pushed non-Mormons to a point of no return. An editorial in the Mormon newspaper Evening and Morning Star in July of 1833 convinced most people that the Mormons advocated the emigration of free Blacks into Missouri. In this issue William W. Phelps, the editor, warned free Black Mormons who entered Missouri about having a certificate of citizenship

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[11] Robertson, "The Mormon Experience Part II," pp. 395, 400-1.

[12] Allen and Leonard, The Story of the Later-Day Saints, p. 83; Robertson, The Mormon Experience Part II," p. 399.

from their former state of residence. He later clarified the article by saying he did not mean to encourage free Black Mormons to settle in Missouri - he only wanted these alien settlers to understand and obey the laws if they did choose to move to Missouri. Phelps even went so far as to run an extra edition of the Star which declared that the earlier article actually meant to discourage free Blacks from migrating to Missouri. But this did little to alleviate the tension as non-Mormons ignored the retraction of the original statement and held a meeting on July 20 to discuss the future fate of the Church.[13]

The meeting produced a declaration concerning the problems connected with the Mormons: the issues of potential Mormon control of Jackson County, attitudes about slavery, and the belief in and the practice of divine revelations. The declaration went on to assert that 1) no new Mormons would settle in Jackson County, 2) the Evening and Morning Star would close its doors, and 3) every Mormon presently residing in the county would move elsewhere. The declaration allowed Mormons reasonable time to liquidate their business holdings and property before leaving, but it warned those who did not heed the warning to consult "their brethren who have the gift of divination and unknown tongues

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[13] Allen and Leonard, The Story of the Later-Day Saints, pp. 84-5.

to inform them of the lot that awaits them."[14]

The non-Mormons presented the written stipulations to six Church leaders, who refused to agree to the demands because of the insufficient time given to consider them. The mob, awaiting an affirmative response that did not materialize, became angry and destroyed the printing office of Evening and Morning Star, the general store and the blacksmith shop; and then tarred and feathered Mormon leaders Charles Allen and Bishop Partridge. Three days later, with still no official word from the Mormon leaders, a mob forced influential Mormons to sign an agreement stating that the Mormon community would leave Jackson County.[15]

Signing this agreement made two things possible: it put the non-Mormons into a more tranquil mood and it gave the local Mormons time to consult with Church leaders in Ohio and with state officials in Jefferson City. The Church leaders and the state officials advised them to seek restitution through the Missouri court system. Although they followed this advice they also proceeded to arm themselves against

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[14] The History of Jackson County, Missouri . . . . Kansas City: Union Historical Company, 1881 [Rep.: Cape Girardeau, Ramfre Press, 1966], pp. 254-5.

[15] The History of Jackson County, Missouri, pp. 255-7. The term "mob" used in this paragraph is not the term used in the county history. Terms used to describe the non-Mormons were "the people," "convention of citizens," and "the committee."

further persecution. When non-Mormons perceived the agreement to be a ploy to gain more time, violence erupted. It continued sporadically for weeks until Lieutenant Governor Lilburn W. Boggs, former Jackson countian, intervened and persuaded the Mormons to avoid further bloodshed by relinquishing their arms and remove themselves peacefully. The Mormons consented to this with the understanding that non-Mormons would also surrender their arms. However, this did not happen, and armed locals harassed the fleeing Mormons until they crossed the county boundary.[16] Because of the suspected treachery on the part of Boggs, Mormons never again fully trusted his intentions toward them. This became more apparent when Boggs was elected Governor in 1836.

The state took no action to punish those responsible for crimes against the Mormons in Jackson County. According to Governor Daniel Dunklin this was because a fair hearing would have proved fruitless. Mormons found refuge in counties occupied by their brethren, but most settled in Clay County, which was directly north of Jackson County. (See map.) Despite the indignation suffered at the hands of Jackson countians, the Mormons were received by Clay County gentiles with no apparent animosity. But two years later, in 1836, Clay County citizens met in the Liberty courthouse and

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[16] The History of Jackson County, Missouri, pp 255-7; Allen and Leonard, The Story of the Later-Day Saints, pp. 85-7.

decided that the Mormons must leave that area also. The reasons given at this time were the Mormons' eastern customs, their differences in religious beliefs, their stand on slavery, and their relationship with the Indians. The Mormons wished to avoid any violence at this time and migrated to Ray County.[17]

In order to avoid any further conflict with non-Mormons, the Church leaders requested that the Missouri General Assembly organize a new county for Mormon settlers exclusively. As it happened, at this time two new counties, Caldwell and Daviess, were formed out of the northern part of Ray County. By 1838 5,000 Mormons occupied Caldwell County, especially in the main city of Far West. Many Mormons had also settled in Daviess County, in the principle town Adam-ondi-Ahman.[18] The settling of a sparsely inhabited area seemed to be the logical solution to a re-occurring problem. It appeared as though the Mormons now had an area they could call their own. However, the General Assembly did not specify that the new counties had been created for sole Mormon habitation, and non-Mormons settled there too.

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[17] Floyd C. Shoemaker and others (eds.), The Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of the State of Missouri, Vol. 1, Columbia: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1922, p. 246; History of Clay and Platte Counties, Missouri, St. Louis: National Historical Company, 1885, pp. 132-4.

[18] History of Caldwell and Livingston Counties, Missouri, St. Louis: National Historical Company, 1886, pp. 116-8.

In 1838 several factors brought the Mormons back into the public's awareness. The most important was the arrival of Joseph Smith - most commonly called the Prophet - and many followers from Ohio. With Smith at the helm, Mormons in Missouri did not have to wait for answers to situations that required immediate attention. Answers sometimes came to Church leaders in the form of divine revelation, which the congregation of believers followed without question.

Occasionally Church members opposed and openly criticized decisions made by the leaders. This was rare, but it did happen. One of the most opposed decisions concerned the formation of an alleged secret society called the Danites. This group had been originally organized to administer punishment to Church members who did not stay in line; however, it evolved into a unit of enforcers that also chastised non-Mormons. These men who had sworn an oath of allegiance and secrecy to Church leaders would go to any means to continue the existence of Mormonism.[19]

At the same time that the accusation of the existence of the band of Danites appeared, former complaints against the

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[19] Missouri. General Assembly. Documents in Relation to the Disturbances with the Mormons (Fayette, Missouri: 1841) "Testimony of Sampson Avard," pp. 97-108. These documents will hereafter be called the Mormon Documents. The documents were gathered during the Missouri General Assembly's investigation into the Mormon affair. Most of the original documents are housed (Record Group 5, Records of the Office of the Secretary of State) at the Missouri State Archives in Jefferson City.

Mormons re-surfaced. The most serious dealt with the alliance of the Church and various Indian tribes. Rumors spread accusing Church members of inciting rebelliousness in the Indians. Non-Mormons feared that such an alliance meant the eventual extermination of everyone not a member of the Church.[20]

State officials were aware of the charges brought against the Mormons, but the charge of treason leveled at Church leaders, especially Joseph Smith, caused the most immediate concern. John Clemison, Caldwell County Circuit Court Clerk, related that Smith considered himself above the law of the land. The basis of this accusation derived from a stirring speech which leader Sidney Rigdon delivered at Far West on July 4, 1838. In this speech - referred to as the "Salt Sermon" - Rigdon shared his opposition on the issue of Mormon dissension from within; but above all, he declared the Church should be free from outside persecution. Many followers interpreted this as meaning that they did not have to obey the law of the land, because individual "kingdoms" would establish their own laws.[21]

After the "Salt Sermon," tension mounted between the two

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[20] Mormon Documents. "Letter of Daniel Ashby to Governor Boggs, September 1, 1838," p. 15; "Statement of John N. Sapp, September 4, 1838," p. 17.

[21] Mormon Documents. "Testimony of John Whitmer," pp. 138-139; "Testimony of John Cleminson," pp. 114-115.

camps, and it was not long before the inevitable first confrontation took place. On August 6 gentiles gathered at Gallatin and attempted to prevent Mormons from voting in the primary election. The old issue of Mormon domination of political offices surfaced when William Peniston, long-time Mormon enemy, incited the crowd gathered at the polls. A fight ensued with casualties, on both sides, but no deaths. When rumors of the fight reached Far West, it was told that numerous Mormons had been killed by a mob. In retaliation, Joseph Smith led a force into Daviess County.[22]

After arriving in Gallatin, Smith realized the exaggeration of the earlier reports and prepared to return to Far West. However, before doing this he decided to get assurance that no further harm would befall Daviess County Mormons. He and his men surrounded the house of Justice of the Peace Adam Black and threatened the lives of Black and other citizens if Black refused to sign a paper declaring no further harm would come to area Mormons.[23]

The indication of violence between Mormons and non-Mormons, plus the fear of an Indian uprising, prompted Governor Lilburn W. Boggs to call out the state militia to

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[22] Smith, Essentials in Church History, p. 181.

[23] Mormon Documents. "Statement of Adam Black, August 28, 1838," p. 15.

keep order. Later, in September, conflicting views about who was in danger reached the governor. Both sides issued complaints. One petition from the "legitimate" citizens of Daviess and Livingston counties asked the governor for military aid against the menacing, lawless band of Mormons, who they believed wanted to carry out a "war of extermination." Another petition (from Mormons in Carroll County) stated that a group of gentiles had threatened to exterminate them if they had not vacated the county by October 1.[24]

Several troop commanders in the field did not agree that a emergency existed. General Alexander W. Doniphan reported no cause for alarm at Far West and General H. G. Parks reported no hostility at Mill Port. General David Rice Atchison advised that the "supposed" insurrection had been quelled and that offenders had been duly charged and tried. Atchison stated that Mormons had acted on the defensive, but he warned they had armed themselves and would fight against

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[24] Mormon Documents. "Petition of Citizens of Daviess and Livingston Counties to Governor Boggs, September 12, 1838," pp. 18-19; "Petition from Citizens of Carroll County to Governor Boggs, September 22, 1838," pp. 29-30; "Letter of B. M. Lisle, Adjutant General, to General David Rice Atchison, September 15, 1838," p. 23.

being driven from their homes.

It appeared as though the cause for alarm had been premature. However, the month of October brought a new dimension to the mounting tension. On October 5, a committee from Chariton County investigated the problematical conditions in Carroll County and reported that non-Mormons threatened to drive the Mormons form the county. This committee defended the position of the Mormons, who they said begged for arbitration by civil authorities.

Two days later in a letter to the citizens of Howard County non-Mormons in the town of DeWitt painted a bleak picture of their situation and pleaded for their help against the "fanatics." A battle between the Mormon and non-Mormons of DeWitt followed, and since no one had been killed, Generals Doniphan and Atchison believed a visit from Governor Boggs would re-establish normal relations. General Atchison even volunteered to accompany the governor. Since no offer from the governor's office materialized, Carroll County Mormons had no choice but to sell their possessions and move to Daviess and Caldwell counties. On October 16, General Atchison again wrote to Governor Boggs expressing his view of

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Mormon Documents. "Letter of General Doniphan to General Atchison, September 15, 1838," p. 24; "Letter of General Parks to Governor Boggs, September 25, 1838," pp. 32-33; "Letters of General Atchison to Governor Boggs, September 17, 20, 23 and 27, 1838," pp. 26, 27, 31 and 34.

the unsafe conditions for Mormons there. He theorized the effect of an appearance by the chief executive would be positive and asked that the governor intervene against the "mobocracy."[26]

Atchison's prediction of trouble in Daviess County became a reality within a few short days when a group of Mormons sacked and set ablaze several stores and houses in the towns of Gallatin and Mill Port. This appears to be the first account of the Mormons shifting from the defensive to the offensive. In a sworn statement, Jonathan Dryden (a non-Mormon) gives a clue concerning this change. He told of the belligerent attitude of the Mormons, but he also recalled the resentment and distrust the Mormons felt towards Governor Boggs. Because of Boggs' unwillingness to give the Mormons protection, they labeled him a "mob man."[27]

By virtue of the numbers involved in the conflict, Sheriff William Morgan of Daviess County felt helpless, and in a letter to Governor Boggs gave his estimation of the

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[26] Mormon Documents. "Report of the Committee of Chariton County, October 5, 1838," p. 40; "Letter of DeWitt Citizens to Citizens of Howard County, October 7, 1838," pp. 39-41; "Letter of General Parks to General Atchison, October 7, 1838," p. 38; "Letters from General Atchison to Governor Boggs, October 9 and 16, 1838," pp. 38-39.

[27] Mormon Documents. "General Atchison to Governor Boggs, October 22, 1838," p. 46; "Affidavit of Jonathan Dryden, October 22, 1838," p. 45.

difficult situation within his jurisdiction. General Atchison echoed Sheriff Morgan's opinion, but he could not determine on whom to place the blame, since both sides continued to break the law by stealing and pillaging. Atchison pledged his loyalty in carrying out orders; but added, if the Mormons had to be chased from the county in mob fashion, he preferred that it be done by volunteers so as not to bring disgrace to the state.[28]

On October 23 and 24 several citizens wrote to Governor Boggs describing Mormon atrocities - especially those of the Danites. Accusations ranged from robbery and destruction of property to gentile genocide by means of poisoning food supplies.[29]

As in the past, Boggs ignored the conflict smoldering in the western part of the state. Field officers who believed the Governor's presence in the troubled area would end the affair pleaded with him to come, and letters from both citizens and city and county officials demanded state

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[28] Mormon Documents. "Letter from Sheriff of Daviess County to Governor Boggs, October 21, 1838," pp. 42-43; "Letter from General Atchison to Governor Boggs, October 22, 1838," pp. 46-47.

[29] Mormon Documents. "Citizens of Ray County to Governor Boggs, October 23, 1838," p. 49; "T. C. Burch to Governor Boggs, October 23, 1838," p. 50; "Austin A. King to Governor Boggs, October 24, 1838," pp. 53-54; "Affidavit of Thomas B. March, October 24, 1838," pp. 57-59.

intervention, but all requests fell on deaf ears. Since no one had died and there had occurred no skirmish involving the state militia, Boggs seemed content to sit back and wait for an excuse to intervene on the side of the non-Mormons. He did not have to wait long.

In order to create a buffer zone between Caldwell and Ray counties, General Atchison ordered Captain Samuel Bogart and his command of militia volunteers to guard that border and to stop the rumored armed force of non-Mormons of Ray County from entering Caldwell County. Upon receipt of his orders on October 24, Bogart and his troops camped on Crooked River in Ray County.[30] A confrontation was in the making.

There are two sides to every story. In this case there is a Mormon and a non-Mormon account of the Battle of Crooked River. According to two Mormons, Thorit Parsons and Arza Judd, Jr., Bogart ordered them from Parson's home at Crooked River on October 24, and they also claimed Bogart's men were on their way to attack Far West. However, in their version Bogart and some of his men testified that they did meet several Mormons near Crooked River and proceeded to read them General Atchison's orders, which confirmed their status as state militia in order to distinguish them from a mob.

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[30] Mormon Documents. "General Atchison to Samuel Bogart, October 23, 1838," p. 108; "Testimony of Captain Samuel Bogart," p. 108.

Regardless of which story is true, the news that Bogart commanded a group of state militia did not reach the Mormon stronghold in Caldwell County. Captain D. Patten, a Mormon state militia captain, heard that the force assembled on Crooked River was nothing more than an armed mob planning to invade Mormon territory. On the next day, October 25, two opposing forces of the same state militia engaged in battle.[31] Casualties remained small, but the story that a group of Mormons - regardless of whether or not they were a part of the state militia - had attacked a force of non-Mormon militia peacefully camped on Crooked River, sent shock waves reaching to Jefferson City.

On October 27, 1838 Governor Lilburn Boggs issued his "Extermination Order," giving the militia specific orders in handling the situation.

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[31] Mormon Documents. "General Atchison to Samuel Bogart, October 23, 1838," p. 108; "Testimony of Thorit Parsons," and "Testimony of Arza Judd, Jr.," pp. 148-149; "Testimony of Samuel Bogart," p. 108; "Testimony of Freeburn H. Gardner," pp. 133-134; "Testimony of Burr Riggs," pp. 134-136; "Testimony of John Lockhart," p. 142; "Testimony of Asa Cook," p. 149.

Head Quarters of the Militia,
City of Jefferson, Oct. 27, 1838.

Gen. John B. Clark.

Sir: - Since the order of this morning to you, directing you to cause four hundred mounted men to be raised within your Division, I have received by Amos Rees Esq. of Ray county and Wiley C. Williams Esq. one of my aids, information of the most appalling character, which entirely changes the face of things, and places the Mormons in the attitude of open and avowed defiance of the laws, and of having made war upon the people of this State. Your orders are, therefore, to hasten your operations with all possible speed. The Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the State if necessary for the public peace - their outrages are beyond all description. If you can increase your force, you are authorized to do so to any extent you may consider necessary. I have just issued orders to Maj. Gen. Willock of Marion county, to raise five hundred men, and to march them to the northern part of Daviess, and there unite with Gen. Doniphan, of Clay, who has been ordered with five hundred men to proceed to the same point for the purpose of intercepting the retreat of the Mormons to the north. They have been directed to communicate with you by express, you can also communicate with them if you find it necessary. Instead therefore of proceeding as first directed to reinstate the citizens of Daviess in their homes, you will proceed immediately to Richmond and then operate against the Mormons. Brig. Gen. Parks, of Ray, has been ordered to have four hundred of his Brigade in readiness to join you at Richmond. The whole force will be placed under your command.

I am very respectfully,
your ob't serv't

L. W. Boggs, Commander-in-Chief.

The letter of Williams and Rees, mentioned by Boggs in his executive order, had been addressed to General John B.

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[32] Mormon Documents. "Extermination Order." This executive order remained on record for over 100 years until Governor Christopher S. Bond rescinded it on June 25, 1976.

Clark, who subsequently forwarded it to the governor. Although some of the basic facts presented in the letter were true, the extent of the happenings surrounding those facts had been exaggerated. Williams and Rees indicated 1) that Mormons had burned almost every house from Gallatin and Mill Port north, 2) that at the Battle of Crooked River the Mormons killed ten of Bogart's troops and had taken most of the rest captive, 3) that the captives taken at Crooked River would be killed, and 4) that the Mormons' next objective was to raid the town of Richmond, in Ray County.[33] Actually, Mormons had not burned out all non-Mormon homes and places of business in Gallatin and Mill Port, nor did they take Bogart's men prisoners or plan to attack any other non-Mormon town. Yet, despite the errors of the statements, Governor Boggs acted on this letter without any confirmation from his commanders in the field. It seems as though he had waited for the right moment to intervene in the conflict -- when the militia could be used against the Mormons rather than protect them.

The question as to whether Boggs actually meant for the militia troops to kill all Mormons has surfaced many times since 1838. Even Mormons could not believe that the governor hated them enough to issue such an order. In a letter

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[33] Mormon Documents. "Letter of Wiley C. Williams and Amos Rees to General Clark, October 25, 1838," pp. 59-60.

written on March 21, 1839, Mormon S. M. Smith questioned the validity of what he had heard. However, Boggs knew the full significance of his words, and in a letter to General Clark on November 1 he stated that Clark should immediately carry out that order (again using the terms exterminate and expel) and suggested that he borrow pieces of artillery from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas to support this action.[34]

Why anyone doubted the intent of the order appears strange, since even the citizens of Daviess and Livingston counties were well aware of Boggs' attitude towards the Mormons. In a request for help against the Mormons in September, non-Mormons stated they "were well aware that your honor is well acquainted with the character of those people called Mormons, . . ."[35] In addition, Boggs' refusal to personally intervene in order to keep the conflict from becoming a full-scale war could be interpreted in one of two ways. Either he did not see the situation developing into anything more than a squabble, or he did see the urgency of the situation and waited for it to become a crisis that could be resolved only through bloodshed. If the latter is the

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[34] Mormon Documents. "Letter of S. M. Smith (Kirtland, Ohio) to Governor Boggs, March 21, 1839," pp. 8-9; "Governor Boggs to General Clark, November 1, 1838," pp. 76-77.

[35] Mormon Documents. "Citizens of Daviess and Livingston Counties to Governor Boggs, September 12, 1838," pp. 18-19.

case, then the order issued on October 27, 1838 should be taken at face value.

Mormon resentment towards the governor did not end with the "Mormon War," and Boggs' belief that the Mormons held him responsible for the affair continued for years. On May 6, 1842 an unknown assailant attempted to murder the ex-Governor at his home in Independence. Speculation arose as to whom would want him dead. Orrin Porter Rockwell, a close friend of Joseph Smith, became the primary suspect. Even Boggs believed Smith and Rockwell conspired to have him killed, and he swore out a complaint to have both men extradited from Nauvoo, Illinois to stand trial.[36]

Three days after the issuance of the "Extermination Order" Colonel William O. Jennings and several hundred militiamen overran a small group of Mormons at Haun's Mill. This occurred only two days after Jennings had met with Jacob Haun and assured him that the militia would not bother the small, peaceful group located there. Greatly out-numbered, the Mormons defended themselves and escaped, leaving behind seventeen of their number dead, which included two small boys and one woman.[37]

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[36] Monte B. McLaws, "The Attempted Assassination of Missouri's Ex-Governor, Lilburn W. Boggs," Missouri Historical Review, LX (October 1965), pp. 51 and 57.

[37] History of Caldwell and Livingston Counties, pp. 145-49.

Daniel Ashby, a member of Jennings' militia unit, testified that the Mormons fired the first shot. He said the fight then continued until the cry of "quarters" echoed all around. The militia silenced their firing, but when the Mormons began firing again the fight resumed until no Mormon returned their fire. Mormon accusations of militia misconduct followed, as they charged some of the militiamen with the killing of the wounded after the fighting had ceased. S. M. Smith told how one ten year-old boy pleaded for mercy from the captors, "but was shot through the head in cold blood, after the excitement of the battle was over."[38]

Later that same afternoon militia forces under General Samuel D. Lucas surrounded the city of Far West with a military force far superior to the Mormon troops within the city boundaries. On the following morning Lucas met with Colonel George M. Hinkle, the Mormon troop commander, and several other leaders. Lucas demanded that Hinkle accept four terms of surrender in order to avoid bloodshed. These were

1. That Church leaders be turned over to him.

2. That property be sold to pay for damages arising from the conflict.

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[38] Mormon Documents. "Statement of Daniel Ashby, November 28, 1838," pp. 82-83 (Daniel Ashby was a State Senator from the Tenth Senatorial District); "Letter of S. M. Smith," pp. 8-9.

3. That all weapons be handed over.

4. That all Mormons agree to leave the state.[39]

Colonel Hinkle is still highly criticized by Church history for the action he took in turning over the leaders as General Lucas requested. But under the circumstances he had little choice. Sheer numbers of non-Mormon militiamen dictated this move. According to Church history, in order to prevent further loss of Mormon lives he disguised the true reason for the meeting of the Church leaders with Lucas. Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Lyman Wight, Parley P. Pratt, and George W. Robinson went out to talk over the conditions of surrender on the evening of October 31 and were immediately arrested. General Lucas in his letter to Governor Boggs on November 2 does not mention any form of deception in order to get the Church leaders turned over as prisoners. He merely states that Colonel Hinkle marched out under a flag of truce and that Lucas then "received the hostages."[40]

The next day the militia arrested Hyrum Smith and Amasa Lyman. Lucas subjected the captives to a court martial, found them guilty of treason, and sentenced them to death.

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[39] Mormon Documents. "General Lucas to Governor Boggs, November 2, 1838," pp. 72-73; "Report of General Clark to Governor Boggs, November 29, 1838," p. 93.

[40] Ibid.

Church history states that General Lucas then ordered General Doniphan to carry out the execution, but Doniphan's reply saved the lives of the Church leaders. It read:

> It is cold blooded murder. I will not obey your order. My brigade shall march for Liberty tomorrow morning at 8 o'clock; and if you execute these men, I hold you responsible before an earthly tribunal, so help me God.[41]

On November 2, 1838 the state militia entered the city of Far West. Accusations later cropped up claiming that troops committed cruel acts, including looting, destruction of property, and the violation of some Mormon women. However, both Lucas and Clark indicated in their correspondence how honorably their men behaved under their respective commands at Far West, and General Robert Wilson replied the same about his troops at Adam-ondi-Ahman in Daviess County. Because of the rumors about the unlawful militia conduct, several Mormons, including Colonel Hinkle, signed a statement expressing their agreement with the description given by Lucas and Clark of the non-Mormon troops' behavior at Far West.[42]

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[41] Smith, Essentials in Church History, pp. 200-201. No mention of this is made in Lucas' or Doniphan's correspondence to the governor.

[42] Mormon Documents. "General Lucas to Governor Boggs, November 2, 1838," p. 73; "Report of General Clark, November 29, 1838," p. 92; "Certificate of Mormons as to the Conduct of General Clark and his Troops, November 23, 1838," p. 87; "General Wilson to General Clark," p. 87.

General Robert Wilson and his troops took charge of the Mormon situation at Adam-ondi-Ahman in Daviess County. He informed the Mormons that protection had been promised them in Caldwell County, and that he and his troops would remain in Daviess County for ten more days. At the end of that time the troops would depart, leaving the Mormons who remained to whatever fate might await them. Wilson did not have to worry about further trouble, as the Mormons in that county gladly moved to Caldwell County for protection.[43]

Because of the advance of winter and due to the concern for the health of the Mormon women and children, General Clark modified the stipulation that all Mormons must evacuate the state immediately. He promised that they could remain in Caldwell County until the Spring, and he assured their safety until they crossed the state boundary. Clark also agreed to return their guns and other weaponry when they left the state.[44]

General Clark transported the Mormon prisoners to Richmond in Ray County, where Circuit Judge Austin A. King presided over a pre-trial examination in his court to determine the validity of the offenses. The court found most

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[43] Mormon Documents. "General Wilson to General Clark, November 12, 1838," p. 78.

[44] Mormon Documents. "General Clark to Governor Boggs, November 10, 1838," p. 66.

of the defendants guilty of various crimes, including treason, and transferred the group to Clay County to await trial.[45] In the course of the next few months the trial date and the court setting changed, and in the process of relocating the prisoners they escaped to freedom outside the state.

By the summer of 1839 many Mormons had fled the state to Illinois and more peaceful surroundings. However, as history has shown, they were not truly accepted by the locals. The "Promise Land" Joseph Smith envisioned to be Missouri had proved nothing more than harassment, destruction, and death for many Mormons.

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[45] Mormon Documents. "Report of General Clark to Governor Boggs, November 29, 1838," pp. 89-93; "Verdict of Judge King, November 12, 1838," pp. 150-151; Shoemaker, The Messages and Proclamations of the Governors, pp. 407-408.

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